

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 7-12, 14, 16 and 18-25 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-7, 9-18 and 20 are canceled and claims 8, 19 and 22-24 are amended. For the following reasons, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

(1) With respect to the Double Patenting :

The Examiner pointed out that Claim 20 will be objected under 37 CFR 1.75 as being substantially duplicate with the contents of Claim 19. Claim 20 has been canceled from the application.

(2) With respect to Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

(2-1) The Examiner has rejected Claims 2-3, 7-12, 16 and 18 as being anticipated by Armstrong (U.S. Patent Number 4,907,427).

In Figs. 1 and 19 of Armstrong, the lock device is provided horizontally against the rack shaft so that the lock device locks the rack shaft. On the other hand, in the steering lock device recited in independent Claim 8 of the present invention, as shown in Fig. 5, the lock device is provided on the underside of the rack shaft being near the lower end of the pinion shaft of the steering gear section so that the lock device of the present invention locks the pinion shaft directly. According to the above difference of the present invention, space near the steering gear section can be effectively utilized. Accordingly, it is submitted that Claim 8 patentably distinguishes over Armstrong.

(2-2) The Examiner has also rejected Claims 19-22 and 24-25 as being anticipated by Kinme et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication Number 2003/0160413) under §102(b).

It is noted that the publication date of Kinme is August 28, 2003, while the filing date of the present application is April 19, 2004. Therefore, since Kinme was not published more than one year before the application date of the present invention, Kinme is not prior art under §102(b).

Further, Kinme has a constitution for locking a worm wheel of the speed reduction unit (worm speed reduction unit), while in the present invention recited in independent Claim 19, the lock device is provided in the outside of the housing of the speed reduction unit and on the side of the output shaft of the speed reduction unit so that the output shaft and the yoke provided on the output shaft, etc. are latched. In this respect, the inventions relating to Kinme and the present invention are quite different.

Generally, sealing is necessary for a housing of a speed reduction unit so that grease, etc. filled in the housing does not leak out. Since the lock device of Kinme is provided inside of the housing of the speed reduction unit, a higher sealing ability is required than a conventional one. On the other hand, since the steering lock device relating to Claim 19 of the present invention is provided in the outside of the housing of the speed reduction unit, the sealing ability can be standard.

Additionally, although the lock device of Kinme is provided on the side of the input shaft (side of the steering wheel) away from the side of the speed reduction unit, the lock device of the present invention is provided on the side of the output shaft of the speed reduction unit. Therefore, in the present invention, the stroke can be ensured greatly at the time of the collision of the steering column. Further, the lock device of the present invention cannot be broken easily from the side of the steering wheel so that criminal offenses can be prevented more.

Thus, it is submitted that claim 19 patentably distinguishes over Kinme.

(3) With respect to Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103 of claims 14 and 23

Claim 14 has been canceled and claim 23 is patentable by virtue of its dependency from claim 19.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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